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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/632,928	08/04/2003	Soichi Kobayashi	009683-476	4942

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EXAMINER	
SIDDIQUI, SAQIB JAVAID	
ART UNIT	**PAPER NUMBER**
2117	

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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/632,928	KOBAYASHI ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Saqib J. Siddiqui	2117	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1)☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on *14 March 2007*.

2a)☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b)☒ This action is non-final.

3)☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4)☒ Claim(s) *1,3,4 and 6-9* is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6)☒ Claim(s) *1,3,4 & 6-9* is/are rejected.

7)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8)☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9)☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10)☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a)☐ accepted or b)☐ objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11)☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12)☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a)☐ All b)☐ Some * c)☐ None of:

1.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

2.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.

3.☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ .
5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Applicant's response was received and entered March 14, 2007.

- Claims 1, 3-4, 6-9 are pending.
- Claims 2 & 5 are canceled.

Response to Amendment

Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1, 3-4, 6-9 have been fully considered but they are moot under new grounds of rejection. Applicant's request for reconsideration of the finality of the rejection of the last Office action is persuasive and, therefore, the finality of that action is withdrawn.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

> The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 1, 3-4, 6-9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Claim 3 is considered indefinite, since the claim does not clearly set forth the metes and bounds of the patent protection desired. See MPEP § 2173.05(c). Claim 3 teaches "a module that does not have a maximum number of word lines." This limitation can be interpreted to teach that the number of word lines in the module reach towards infinity and beyond, therefore the claim is indefinite.

As per claims 1, 4 and 6-9:

These claims are rejected by virtue of their dependency.

Claims 1, 3-4, & 6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kawamata US PG Pub no. US 2001/0042231 A1 and further in view of Woods et al. US Pat no. 4,245,299.

As per claim 1:

Kawamata/Woods teaches the semiconductor integrated circuit according to claim 3 comprising: a comparator (paragraph [0029], lines 1-2) comparing a value of data read from each memory cell (paragraph [0029], lines 3-4) connected to an activated word line with an expected value to be read from said each memory cell (paragraph [0029], lines 4-5), for each column in a test mode, an error register accumulatively holding error data based on a comparison result by said comparator (paragraph [0030], lines 1-4), wherein each bit (paragraph [0056], lines 1-2) of said error data indicates said comparison result by said comparator for a corresponding column (paragraph [0039], lines 5-12), and said each bit takes a first logical value when said comparison result for said corresponding column always indicates equality whichever word line is activated, and takes a second logical value when once said comparison result for said corresponding column indicates difference (paragraph [0056], lines 2-6).

As per claim 3:

Kawamata substanitally teaches the semiconductor integrated circuit according to claim 1, wherein said semiconductor integrated circuit has a plurality of modules having their operations controlled by respective chip select signals (Figure 5 # 110, paragraph [0057], lines 1-6), and said each module has a control circuit controlling an

operation of reading or writing data from or into a memory cell (claim 3, lines 13-18), irrespective of a value of said chip select signal, in the test mode said plurality of modules receive a common address signal sent through a common internal address bus (paragraph [0059], lines 1-3), said control circuit in a module that does not have a maximum number of word lines controls an operation of reading or writing data from or to a memory cell (Figure 5 "WEB", (paragraph [0061], lines 1-3), irrespective of a value of said chip select signal, only when values of one or more prescribed bits forming an address signal are prescribed values.

Kawamata does not explicitly teach the memory modules to have different number of word lines.

However, Woods et al. in an analogous art teaches a memory test systems that test different memories of different sizes (Figure 1, column 7, lines 40-65). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to enable Kawamata's apparatus to test memory modules with varying sizes and varying number of word lines because one of ordinary skill in the art would have realized that allowing Kawamata to test memory modules of different sizes will enable Kawamata's apparatus to test various types and sizes of memories in one execution, thus making the testing procedure more useful and efficient. Further, The Supreme Court has held that "a patent for a combination which only unites old elements with no change in their respective functions...obviously withdraws what is already known into the field of its monopoly and diminishes resources available to skillful men...The combination of familiar elements according to known methods is likely to be obvious

when it does no more than yield predictable results." KSR Int'l Co. v. Teleflex Inc., 2007 U.S. LEXIS 4745, (U.S. 2007)

As per claim 4:

Kawamata/Woods et al. teaches the semiconductor integrated circuit according to claim 3, wherein said prescribed bits are used in specifying a word line of a module having a maximum number of word lines and are not used in specifying a word line of said module that does not have a maximum number of word lines (paragraph [0061], lines 3-10).

As per claim 6:

Kawamata/Woods et al. teaches the semiconductor integrated circuit according to claim 1, wherein said semiconductor integrated circuit has a redundancy circuit in a column (paragraph [0052], lines 1-7).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

> (a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham* **v.** *John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.

4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

Claims 7-9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable Kawamata/Woods et al. and further in view of Urakawa US Patent no. US 6,324,106 B2

As per claim 7-9:

Kawamata/Woods et al. substantially teaches a semiconductor integrated circuit comprising: a comparator (paragraph [0029], lines 1-2) comparing a value of data read from each memory cell (paragraph [0029], lines 3-4) connected to an activated word line with an expected value to be read from said each memory cell (paragraph [0029], lines 4-5), for each column in a test mode, an error register accumulatively holding error data based on a comparison result by said comparator (paragraph [0030], lines 1-4), wherein each bit (paragraph [0056], lines 1-2) of said error data indicates said comparison result by said comparator for a corresponding column (paragraph [0039], lines 5-12), and said each bit takes a first logical value when said comparison result for said corresponding column always indicates equality whichever word line is activated, and takes a second logical value when once said comparison result for said corresponding column indicates difference (paragraph [0056], lines 2-6), wherein said semiconductor integrated circuit has a redundancy circuit in a column (paragraph [0052], lines 1-7), and wherein said error register outputs held error data when an address signal indicates a prescribed value (paragraph [0076], lines 1-3)

Kawamata/Woods et al. does not explicitly teach a semiconductor integrated circuit wherein said semiconductor integrated circuit further comprising a repair code

generation circuit, a program circuit including at least one fuse element for outputting a repair code corresponding to a state of said fuse element, and further elements related to the repair code.

However, Urakawa, in an analogous art, teaches a semiconductor integrated circuit wherein said semiconductor integrated circuit further comprising a repair code generation circuit receiving said error data for generating a repair code for repairing a defective memory cell array using said redundancy circuit (column 6, lines 10-11), a program circuit including at least one fuse element for outputting a repair code corresponding to a state of said fuse element (column 4, lines 39-41); a register holding a repair code (column 6, lines 8-101); a selector selecting and outputting one of the repair code output from said program circuit and the repair code output from said register (column 10, lines 30-35); and a repair control circuit controlling repair of a defective memory cell array in accordance with the repair code output from said selector (column 6, lines 12-14), and a processor (column 6, lines 54-55) controlling an execution of a two-step test, wherein said processor controls writing of test data into a memory cell (column 5, lines 26-28) and reading of test data from a memory cell without causing said repair control circuit to perform repair in a first step of the test (Figure 7 # 3, column 8, lines 42-44), generates a repair code corresponding to error data stored in said error register in said first step of the test for storage into said register, and controls writing of test data (column 5, lines 26-28) into a memory cell and reading of test data from a memory cell (column 5, lines 28-30) while allowing said selector to output the repair code from said register to cause said repair control circuit

to perform the repair. Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to apply the fuse element and repair code circuitry to memory testing apparatus of Kawamata/Woods et al.. This modification would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art because one of ordinary skill in the art would have recognized that applying the fuse would have allowed to shift the comparator result to adjoining memory cell column without using a memory cell column in which the defective cell exists, and repair code circuitry would have allowed for the recovery of the defective bit.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Saqib J. Siddiqui whose telephone number is (571) 272-6553. The examiner can normally be reached on 8:00 to 4:30.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Jacques Louis-Jacques can be reached on (571) 272-6962. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see http://pair-direct.uspto.gov. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Saqib Siddiqui
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07/02/2007

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